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TAGS: KDEM PREL PGOV I2

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR KHALILZAD'S OCTOBER 10 MEETING WITH KRG
OFFICIAL FALAH BAKIR

REF: A. 08BAGHDAD2968

B. 08BAGHDAD3194

¶1. (C) In a meeting October 10 with Ambassador Khalilzad, Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Head of Foreign Relations Falah Bakir pressed the oft-heard Kurdish line that the Iraqi constitution must be respected as Iraq faces upcoming elections, decisions on disputed boundaries, and pressure to resolve the oil revenue sharing law impasse. Falah, the primary KRG interlocutor for the growing diplomatic community in Erbil, added that the Kurds were not responsible for the delay in the recently passed election law, and in addition KRG's Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani issued a statement supporting re-inserting Article 50 into the elections law, to guarantees minority representation on provincial councils.

¶2. (C) Falah requested US assistance in resolving the Khanaqin situation (ref A). He openly worried that the Iraqi army action in Khanaqin was an indicator for future operations, warning, &dictatorship can come back.⁸ (Note: Khanaqin is a disputed territory, and the recent military maneuvering failed to resolve whether the KRG or GOI would administer the area. End note.) Falah said all parties await the release of the last two phases of SRSG de Mistura's report (ref B), before stating their final positions on disputed territories. Resolving the boundaries, including the Kirkuk's future status, Falah said, remained the KRG's top priority. When, not if, Kirkuk joins the KRG, Falah continued, the KRG would respect power sharing amongst the various groups.

¶3. (C) On the SFA, Falah said KRG Prime Minister Barzani would travel to Baghdad to demonstrate support Kurdish commitment to the SFA. Khalilzad advised that waiting until the last minute to sign the SFA was a risky strategy, but thanked the Kurds for their efforts. In regards to Turkey, Falah reported that KRG Prime Minister Barzani continued to send a message of dialogue and doing business with Turkey, and in a public statement October 9 condemned the PKK attacks in Turkey.
Khalilzad